

And so what was the result? The result was this: Gas prices doubled; home heating oil prices tripled; oil company profits quadrupled, but the average American was now faced with an additional \$1,500 in gas prices. And at the same time as oil company profits went up and as pocketbooks got lower and lower, the wallets of the American people lost more and more value, we actually increased our dependence on foreign oil. This year we are actually importing 1.6 million barrels of oil a day more than we were before the energy policy that the prior Congress passed and that the President signed.

□ 1545

So we're actually more dependent on foreign oil, and the American people are less well off. Oil companies did very, very well. But we did nothing to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and the American people lost \$1,500 in the process.

Well, we're going to change that. We have the opportunity to change that this week. We're going to pass, I hope on a bipartisan basis, a new approach, a new strategy, a fundamental change in energy policy. And we're going to redirect those subsidies from oil companies to the pocketbooks of the American people. We're going to create as many as 3 million jobs in renewable technologies. We're going to invest those subsidies in the creation of new green jobs in solar and hydrogen and wind and geothermal. We're going to create those new jobs and regain our manufacturing capacity and capabilities.

Mr. Speaker, it troubles me that here we are, the country that defeated the most monumental threat of the 20th century in Nazi Germany and Japan, and we're now behind Germany and Japan in solar technologies. Of the top 10 wind companies on Earth, only one is American. Iceland, Denmark, now making great strides in geothermal and wind. We're not. Seven out of every 10 cars in Brazil are fuel flexible. We're not.

We can regain our capacities. We can regain our skills, we can regain our competitive edge in the world. We can regain our manufacturing strength in the world by leapfrogging ahead of them in renewable technologies. To do that, we've got to make investments in the American people, not the bottom line profits of oil companies.

When we gave those oil companies the opportunity to make those investments in the American people, what did they do? They made those investments in the oil companies' CEOs. One cashed out with about \$60 million.

We believe that it's time to make those investments in the American people, in American jobs, in renewable energy. And by doing so, we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

We have created a paradigm, Mr. Speaker, where, with a \$9 trillion debt, we are borrowing money from China to fund our defense budgets to buy oil

from the Persian Gulf to fuel our military to protect us from China and the Persian Gulf. It makes no sense.

This week, we have the opportunity to take a giant leap for common sense: reinvest in the American people, reinvest in American jobs, reinvest in our defense, reinvest in our competitive edge, reinvest in our human capital, reduce our dependence on foreign oil. And that's precisely what we will do by passing this bill.

#### VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about one of the novel concepts that Congress has come up with over the years. It goes back to the Reagan administration and a bipartisan bill signed by President Reagan, the VOCA Act was established. It is called the Victims of Crime Act. It's a novel idea in that convicted felons in Federal court who are assessed fees and fines must pay those fees and fines into a fund. That fund then is saved and reserved for victims of crime for restitution. It also establishes and takes care of domestic violence shelters where spouses can hide away from those abusers. It establishes rape crisis coalition centers. It promotes and sends money to the victim advocates throughout the United States who go to court with victims of crime, especially in violent crime. It does many good things. And over the years, because our Federal judges have continued to fine and assess greater penalties to criminals, that VOCA fund, as of today, is \$1.7 billion, money contributed by criminals that goes to crime victims. What a wonderful idea. And let me make it clear, this is not taxpayer money. Taxpayers didn't fund this. Criminals did. Criminals paying the rent on the courthouse, paying for the system that they have created.

So what is the problem? The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that that fund, every year, that's administered by the Federal Government continues to be robbed by other bureaucrats and continues to be less money that's available for crime victims. This year we have \$1.7 billion in the fund. Last year \$635 million of that was used for crime victims, but this year the fund is being cut by the bureaucrats to \$590 million. That's not a lot of money, but it means that victims shelters throughout the country will be closed, that these rape crisis coalition centers will be closed because they're barely keeping the lights on.

So why is that happening, Mr. Speaker? I do not know.

I do know that the Justice Department now is going to charge a surcharge on the victims fund of 5.5 percent to administer the fund. They are doing so without the approval of Congress. They have no right to take \$30

million to pay for their own bureaucracy. That's not authorized by Congress.

We also know that the administration wants to take part of that money and apply it to other programs out there.

Once again, this is not taxpayer money. It's money that belongs to victims. And the Federal Government and, specifically, the Justice Department and the Federal bureaucrats need to keep their hands off that money, because it's not their money. It belongs to victims of crime.

Mr. Speaker, victims of crime do not have a lobbyist up here in Washington, DC, a high-dollar lobbyist advocating on their behalf. They expect us, Members of Congress, to be their lobbyist, and it's important that we do not let the bureaucrats, the robber barons take money out of that VOCA fund and apply it to other programs.

Find that money somewhere else. This money belongs to crime victims. It should not be robbed by the bureaucrats. It should be left alone. And, if anything, we ought to raise how much money we take out of that fund for victims of crime.

It's \$1.7 billion this year. Next year it's going to be \$1.9 billion criminals contribute to that fund. And yet our government continues to let less and less money be applied to victims. We have more crime victims in this country than we did last year, and we need victims assistance.

The Victims of Crime Act is a good idea. Let's leave it alone and quit robbing it to pay for other Federal programs. And if the Federal Government needs money to pay for these other programs, take money out of foreign aid or something. But leave victims alone.

Victims are a unique breed of people in our country, Mr. Speaker, and it's our responsibility to take care of them and make sure that they get the compensation they need, paid for by criminals who commit crimes against them.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION HAS FAILED DISPLACED GULF COAST RESIDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker and Members, I rise today to share with this body the unbelievable circumstances surrounding the victims of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina.

I thought the American people had been shocked at the lack of response by our Government to the victims of these hurricanes. I thought the American people could hardly ever get over the fact that they witnessed victims of a natural disaster held up in a convention center in New Orleans for days without food, without water, begging for help.

It was unbelievable when we discovered that the head of FEMA, Mr. Brown at the time, said that he did not know that those victims were out in front of the convention center waving white flags, inside the convention center sick and even dying.

It was unbelievable to witness one of the richest, if not the richest country in the world with the lack of adequate response to its citizens at a time when we were needed most.

And so we're trying to work through this. We have been working to try and get money to the gulf coast, to New Orleans, to Mississippi. We have tried to work to save public housing so that residents could return who had been evacuated and told that the housing would be rehabilitated and they could return.

Many of us have been pushing not only on FEMA and our government, but working with the State and local government trying to correct the injustices that we have now come to know that have taken place in the gulf coast.

And now we're confronted with another unbelievable situation. How much bungling can you do? How much mismanagement can you be responsible for?

Finally, we find there's more. The Federal Emergency Management Administration, that is, FEMA, has admitted what people living in trailers have known for several years: that these trailers contain high levels of formaldehyde that pose serious health risks for residents. Almost after moving in, trailer residents started to complain about respiratory and other formaldehyde-related health problems.

The first private study on the unacceptable levels of formaldehyde in these trailers was in 2006. A few months later, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration conducted its own testing and found formaldehyde concentration as high as 5 parts per million, or 50 times higher than the level the Environmental Protection Agency considers elevated. But FEMA didn't stop the sale or deployment of trailers until July of 2007. And here it is 2008, and it still has no plan to move families out of these environmental health hazards and into safe, permanent, and affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker and Members, we've got to force FEMA to rise to the challenge of getting these 38,000 families out of these toxic trailers as soon as possible and move them into safe, permanent, and affordable housing. Unfortunately, because affordable housing creation has not been a priority of this Bush administration, I know this is going to be a difficult task.

The Bush administration has failed to ensure that the gulf coast region has an adequate supply of affordable housing for its displaced persons, including those in trailers. The administration approved redevelopment plans in Mississippi and Louisiana that provide less affordable housing than was available before Hurricane Katrina. It even allowed, believe this, the State of Mississippi to move \$600 million away from housing assistance to the redevelopment of the Port of Gulfport.

Now, mind you, there are still people who are out of State who want to come home. There are still people living in trailers. There are still people doubled up with family members. And this administration, this Housing Secretary said to the State of Mississippi, go ahead and take \$600 million from housing assistance and you can go ahead and use it for the redevelopment of the port.

In New Orleans, the administration has approved the demolition of 4,500 units of public housing, with no regard to the fact that there are 12,000 homeless persons who could have benefited from having a roof over their heads. The demolition of New Orleans' public housing during an affordable housing crisis is a prime example of this administration's shortsightedness and lack of concern for our country's lowest income renters.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I simply close by saying, here we are, FEMA again, mismanagement, lives at stake. They have no answers.

□ 1600

#### SUNSET MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I stand once again before this body with yet another sunset memorial. It is February 26, 2008, in the land of the free, home of the brave; and before the sun sets today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand. That's just today, Mr. Speaker. That is more than the number of innocent Americans that we lost on September 11, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,818 days since the travesty called *Roe v. Wade* was handed down; and since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of its own children. Some of them cried and screamed as they died; but because it was amniotic fluid passing over the vocal cords instead of air, we could not hear them in this Chamber.

All of them had at least four things in common: first, they were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. Second, each one of them died a nameless and lonely death and each of their mothers, whether she realizes it or not, will never be quite

the same. And all of the gifts these children might have brought to humanity are now lost to us forever.

Yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself in our own silent genocide which mercilessly annihilates the most helpless victims to date, those yet unborn.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it's important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here. Thomas Jefferson said: "The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government." The phrase in the 14th amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says: "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is that clarion declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection we should have given them.

Perhaps today, Mr. Speaker, maybe someone new who hears this sunset memorial will finally realize that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,818 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children is enough and that America, the same America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous enough, compassionate enough to find a better way than abortion on demand.

So tonight may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this Chamber and in this sunshine of life are numbered and that all too soon each one of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time. And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the cries of the innocent unborn, may that be the day when we finally find the humanity, the courage and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.